

Addiction

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Summary: Faced with the prospect of Cordelia's departure, Xander must come to terms with his addiction.

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> <meta name="Author"> Addiction **Title: Addiction**

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I think everyone has addictions. We're all dependent on one thing or another. We all have our drugs. It's just with some of us, the stuff that we need is more obvious. And in others, we can't barely see it at all. But it's there. You just have to look, inside of yourself, to find that thing that you need, the thing you can't live without.

For Giles, it's his books. Buffy, her Angel. Willow and Oz, well, they're addicted right now. To each other.

I realized my drug the minute I lost her. Up until that minute, I don't think I ever knew that I needed her, in some form or another in my life. She was like an addiction, one that I've tried more than once to get myself rid of.

I don't think it was love right then. It was need, I knew that, but not love. Cause I think if it was love I never would have done what I did, I never would have allowed myself to think that some how or

another, it was okay, what I was doing behind her back, with my best friend, with her friend.

All my life I thought I hated her. I lived for the moments when I would call out something mean, derogatory, and for that split second when her eyes flashed and she turned, she only had eyes for me. I was the only thing on her mind, for that second, right before she would snap that retort and continue on her way, in her own perfect little social bubble.

I was out of her mind then, and I would smile and turn, and wait for another opportunity where I would force her to pay attention to me.

I needed my daily dose of Cordelia Chase.

I didn't think anything of it then, it was harmless crush that I would never admit to anyone, especially myself.

Until I kissed her. And then everything changed. The addiction wasn't one sided then, she needed me then, too. I knew it, because why else would she risk her reputation, risk everything just to sneak into a closet with me for some groping?

I had her. I had my Cordy then, for a long time I had her.

I never thought I actually would get her. But I did, I had her. And then... well... you ever hear that saying you never know a good thing till it's gone?

That is just the epitome of truth for me. See, when she caught me with Willow, and was impaled on that rebar, she almost died, and she left me, she told me to stay away from her, and she became a different person, this shell of the woman I had kissed, held, cared for. Sometimes while she would ignore me, I would just stare at her, wondering when the girl I dated went, cause she wasn't there anymore.

But like I said, we all have our addictions.

She told me to stay away from her, but I couldn't, and I don't think she could stay away from me either. And so we did what seemed acceptable to everyone, even ourselves. I think it was the only way I would get to see her, talk to her, see that little flash in her eyes that would only happen when she talked to me. We bit at each other, tore into each other, finding whatever harsh thing we could say that would rip into our hearts.

And I was fine with that. Cause I still had my daily dose.

It was prom that made me realize that the dosage wasn't enough. I needed something more. I needed to see that softness again.

I was given the chance to be the hero, and I took it.

And that look on her face, when she said thank you, it was exactly what I needed. See, I knew then I wasn't going to get over her. I was addicted. And in love.

I still had my daily dose. She and I were friends now.

And now she was leaving, to Los Angeles, and I was worried sick, and feeling like a bastard.

She was leaving, and I wouldn't get my daily dose.

I was leaving for my road trip in two days, she was leaving tomorrow, and I wouldn't see her. I couldn't do it. I needed my addiction, I couldn't stand not seeing her in one form or another.

I didn't know what I was going to do. Torn between the ridiculousness of my statements, and the truth of it I felt in my core, I battled within myself.

I battled a long time, and in the end, I think I lost my willpower, because suddenly I was standing in front of Cordelia's ratty old apartment, banging so hard the hinges were squeaking along with the quaking door.

The door swung open, and there was my drug, dressed in jeans and an old tank top.

"What?!" She burst, and then seeing me, her face completely changed. I guess I didn't look too good. "Xander, what is it? What's wrong?" She immediately said, and then her face froze. "Oh, God. There's no icky demon thing running around, right? Please say no, cause I need to pack and I don't have time to go and be bait or something idiotic, make Willow be bait." She was about to close the door when my hand stopped her.

"Cordy, don't leave." My breathing was shallow, my chest heaving. Her face was still for a moment, and then her eyes averted, she stepped back.

"Come in, Xander." Was all she remarked.

Feeling myself sweating, I nodded shortly, stepping into the apartment, not even waiting for her to close the door behind me before I grabbed her by the hand and pulled her to the sofa.

"Cordelia." I began, sitting down, my face intense, my heart thumping loudly. "I love you. I need you. You can't leave. I can't not see you everyda-"

"Xander." Her fingers were soft when she pressed against my lips, forcing me to silence. Her face was firm, as if I were a kid and she was the mommy, her eyes were a soft sheen of hazel brilliance. "Don't be a dork. You can't ask me to do that."

I gulped, hearing the soft trembling behind the firm tone. "Don't you see, Cordy?" I whispered. "We've never not seen each other every day, ever since we were four, we've had each other every day, in one form or another-"

"And it's like a drug." She finished simply, smiling sadly. "I know, dorkhead." My brown eyes searched hers, seeing the lingering sadness that glossed over them, feeling my own watering in reaction, my hand gripped hers hard, so hard.

I choked down a sob, leaning forward to capture her mouth with mine, searching her hungrily, afraid to let go. She pressed that beautiful body against mine, and I felt tears staining my cheeks, knowing at once that they weren't mine. I pulled my mouth away from hers, my lips on her cheeks then, brushing away the salty moisture that trickled down her face. She was utterly still then, my eyes half closed, I watched her face as I brushed my lips over her forehead, kissing her closed eyes, sliding down her nose, along her cheek bone, brushing over lips lips and then going to the tender spot just below her ear.

She shivered, and I used the moment to kiss her again, this time soft, slow, and deep. When our lips drew apart slowly, I was shaking, my chest heaving against her pliant body. I closed my eyes then, sliding my forehead along her skin, resting it against her cheek, holding her with all my life.

"Why fight it, Cordy?" I whispered. "Stay with me. We need each other. We do."

She mumbled something, and I had to ask her to say it again. She pulled back, shaking her head.

"I said we have to."

My heart plummeted then, and I shook my head emphatically. "No! See, now that we know, we can-"

"Do what, Xander?" She gave me one of those sad smiles. "My parents are in jail, you're not going to college, neither am I. There's no way I'll ever get a decent job here. I have to go."

"Then I'll go with you." I stated immediately. She caught my hand and squeezed it.

"You know you won't. You'll take one look at Buffy and Willow and Giles and Oz and you'll know that you can't." There was no anger in that statement, and it surprised me. Her eyes were remarkably clear, and as I stared into them, I saw what I didn't want to see, I saw clarity, I saw the truth.

And I groaned. Leaning back, I closed my eyes. "How can I not see you everyday?" I whispered, my voice barely above a sob. My eyes were still closed when her fingers landed on my face, trailing along my lips to outline them perfectly. I kept my eyes shut tight, only allowing myself to feel.

"I love you." I whispered against them. The fingers stopped for a minute, pulled away only to be replaced by a pair of soft, feathery lips and warm breath.

The kiss went on for a while, and she released me then. "I know." She whispered against her lips. "I need you too, Xander. Every day."

My eyes opened, I saw her moist eyes, and offered one last vestige to my breaking heart. "Then don't leave."

She looked away then, getting up and walking to the other side of the room. "You remember a while ago, when we snuck into your room, and we looked through that self help book your dad had left?"

I nodded, remembering. It was one of those books that Mom would buy for him, after she would kick him out of the house and he would swear he would change, he would read the first chapter, and then throw it out. I had managed to hide that one.

She turned then, giving me a faltering smile. "My name is Cordelia Anne Chase, and I'm a Xanderholic." I swallowed, aware of what she was doing, feeling my heart give then.

"Don't Cordy."

"Now you say it." She said, coming forward, sitting next to me. I gave her an incredulous look. "Come on Xander, first step is to admit it."

I nodded slowly, saying the words slowly. "My name is Alexander Lavelle Harris, and I'm a Cordyholic."

She nodded, her voice thick when she spoke, her words soothing and slow. "Now, we say that prayer. The ones they say at the AA meetings."

My eyes connected with hers, feeling them water in time with hers. "Okay." We took a breath, and began.

"God, grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, the courage to change the things I can, and the wisdom to know the difference."

She nodded, squeezing my hand. "We can't change our needs, but we do have the courage to change our situation, and Xander, God, I'm hope I'm wise enough to realize we have to be apart to do it." She smiled a faint trembling trace of a grin. "Too much of a good thing can be bad for you Xander."

I knew what she was saying. We needed time to grow, to grow for ourselves, for each other, for everyone who had ever depended on us.

Together, we would only pull each other down. At least for now.

"I love you."

She smiled, nodding. "I love you." Our lips met again, melting against each other, for a moment before we pulled apart.

I swallowed. "I want to take you." I said thickly as she nestled against my chest, burrowing herself in my arms. "I want to move you in to Los Angeles."

"Xander, I don't even know where I'll be staying." She must have felt my heart beat quicken because she just shook her head. "I'll be okay, I'm Cordelia Chase. I'm a survivor."

I squeezed her. We didn't look at each other then, the sadness in the air evidence that we couldn't look at each other without breaking down. And so we only felt and heard.

"I'm going to end up with you, Cordelia." I whispered.

She wasn't so optimistic. "Maybe." She whispered back.

"Not maybe. I will."

She said nothing then, and we fell silent then, aware that nothing else needed to be said. We were a single person then, feeling whole at that moment, feeling peace.

There's a saying that goes something like, we never get over our addictions. We just learn to control them.

I guess so. Withdrawal for me is something I'm not looking forward to. Coupled with my love, my need seems insurmountable for me to overcome.

Maybe I will. Maybe I won't. Time will only tell.

But laying there, with my addiction nestled in my arms, I could believe that I would get my daily dose back again.

I knew then, she would always be with me, in my heart. Wherever she went, I would be there for her. In our hearts, in our brains, in our minds.

We had broken each other, and we were going to heal each other. We were addiction, we are addiction. And I guess the first step to healing was to admit it.

And we had that, the knowledge that we needed each other, something we never admitted before. At least we had that to sustain on.

I closed my eyes, muttering the prayer again with my lips, feeling her heart beat against my chest.

Time would only tell.

FIN.

>comments to mistyjox@hotmail.com <p>

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